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SUBJECT: UKRAINE: PM TYMOSHENKO MAKES THE PITCH FOR MAP AT BUCHAREST

Classified By: Ambassador for reasons 1.4(a,b,d).

¶1. (C) Summary: PM Tymoshenko made a more convincing case for her personal commitment to Ukraine's request for a MAP at Bucharest during a February 5 meeting with visiting HFAC Europe Subcommittee Chairman Wexler (D-FL). She told Wexler that the letter requesting MAP signed by the President, PM and Speaker was the first open declaration of Ukraine's united intent; that the goal of obtaining a MAP was included in her draft government program which had already been approved by the Cabinet and forwarded to the Rada; and that the process of requesting a MAP was open and democratic, with the leaders of all three branches -- the Rada majority, the Government and the President -- unanimous in their support. Tymoshenko noted that both parts of the orange team -- her bloc and the President's political force -- had made European and specifically Euro-Atlantic integration the basis of their campaigns and the coalition agreement. In Tymoshenko's view, NATO membership was the ultimate guarantee of Ukraine's independence and the orange team needed to stay together in order to achieve this goal. The PM told Congressman Wexler that her government was committed to a reinvigorated NATO Information Campaign, supported by real resources to combat the "powerful propaganda machine" working against NATO through Ukraine's largest television companies, both of which, she asserted, were Russian-owned.

¶2. (C) Comment: This is the most animated and confident that we have seen PM Tymoshenko on the subject of NATO and were impressed by her ability to make the case for Ukraine's request for a MAP at NATO. Perhaps it was because Wexler began the meeting by telling Tymoshenko that people in the U.S. were uncertain about her personal commitment to the request for MAP and she decided to defend her position. Whatever the reason, Tymoshenko stayed on point about the importance of getting MAP, acknowledging the existence of tensions within the coalition and with the President, but was confident that the orange team would stay together to achieve its goal of getting MAP -- the two were united by a common goal of Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration. Even when DPM Nemiryia raised the possibility of an Allied response to Ukraine's request for MAP along the lines of "not yet, but something else," Tymoshenko agreed it was possible, but said confidently "a yes would be better" and acknowledged that she'd have to do the work to get a positive response from the Allies. End Summary and Comment.

I Support MAP

¶3. (C) After congratulating the PM on Ukraine's invitation to join the WTO, Congressman Wexler raised the ongoing bipartisan effort in the U.S. House of Representatives to help Ukraine get a MAP at the NATO Summit in Bucharest in

April. Wexler noted that before leaving for Kyiv, he and his minority counterpart on the HFAC Europe Subcommittee had written a letter to the President urging him to support Ukraine's request. He said that Senators Biden and Lugar had launched a similar effort in the Senate, and there were plans to file a resolution in both the House and the Senate to show congressional support for Ukraine's NATO aspirations. The Congressman noted that President Bush had not yet made up his mind on how to respond to Ukraine's request for MAP, but that an indication of a strong commitment from the PM could help the President make the decision to support Ukraine, and equally important, begin to lobby Paris and Berlin to support Ukraine's request as well. According to Wexler, "the more that you show you are 100 percent committed to MAP, the more likely it is that the President will support you."

¶4. (C) Tymoshenko said that there were three points that she wanted to make in response to Wexler's question. First, this was the first time that the President, PM and Rada Speaker had openly published a letter outlining their support for MAP and now every Ukrainian citizen knew exactly where they stood. Second, this was the first time that Ukraine's request for MAP was clearly spelled out in the government program, which her government had drafted and approved, and then passed to the Rada for approval. Third, the steps to request a MAP were taken openly and democratically. She said that the President, Government and Rada majority had "no doubts" in their request and were unanimous in their support.

The problems in Ukraine's request were not related to the certainty of the President, PM and Speaker in the request. The problems came from elsewhere.

¶5. (C) At issue was the division of the political scene into two parts. One side was orange and democratic with a clear strategy, that had two additional votes in the Rada that gave it the majority. She accused the other part -- the

Party of Regions - of having a different strategy of returning the country in the direction of the USSR. The two political forces entered the September elections with straightforward slogans -- Regions said "no" to NATO accession and supported membership in the Single Economic Space (SES), a Soviet-like structure. On the other hand, Tymoshenko and Yushchenko, although with two separate teams, have the same goal, namely European integration, and where possible Euro-Atlantic integration. This was the foundation of their political platforms and of Ukrainian independence. Therefore, when parties changed -- and she had been PM twice and Yanukovych also PM twice, the development of the country also changed, meaning that political stability was almost unknown here. Therefore, according to Tymoshenko, this is why the movement toward Euro-Atlantic integration depended on a clear, constant and stable orange team.

¶6. (C) Unfortunately, upcoming presidential elections in 2010 were causing problems within the orange team -- the situation was "not ideal" and this was evident in the continuing political crisis in the Rada and elsewhere, according to Tymoshenko. The PM said that she "did now know who would win -- it all depended on how the democratic team worked together and what the orange government could do for people over the next two years." In the PM's view, it was critical that the orange team win the next presidential election in order to keep moving toward Euro-Atlantic integration.

A Real NATO Information Campaign

¶7. (C) Tymoshenko said that real problem in Ukrainian society was that the mass media had split Ukraine into pro-NATO and anti-NATO camps. There was a powerful propaganda machine working against NATO, through Ukraine's two major television channels, both controlled by forces from "outside Ukraine" (read Russia). Today, the PM estimated that 25% of the population was pro-NATO -- an increase from 18% in the recent past -- and she said that step-by-step, the pro-NATO forces were making progress in changing the attitude

of the general population. Nonetheless, 62% of the population remained opposed to NATO (with only a small percentage truly undecided). So this was a difficult position politically for her. Nevertheless, the orange team absolutely supports Euro-Atlantic integration and the only question was "how long do we need to stay in power to implement policies to ensure that our Euro-Atlantic policies are unchangeable in the future?"

¶18. (C) In response to Congressman Wexler's question about how the U.S. could help, the PM said that a real and well-financed NATO Information campaign was important in order to get rid of negative stereotypes about NATO left over from the Cold War -- and her government was committed to organize and fund such an effort. She said that the "negative propaganda" used by her opponents "must be stopped." She repeated that Ukraine's two strongest television stations were Russian-owned and that they were being used to influence the population's views. Tymoshenko suggested that this negative influence could only be countered by establishing public television channels to allow the government to show the opposite view. For example, an excellent documentary had been produced about NATO -- but was only shown on Ukrainian television in the middle of the night when no one was watching. She suggested that the 62% of Ukrainians opposing NATO were oriented toward Russian attitudes; polls said that 70% of Ukrainians trusted Putin. As a result, Ukraine needed to produce its own high-quality informational programs. To reduce the negative views of the population toward NATO, she hoped to focus on showing the high level of cooperation between Russia and the Alliance.

¶19. (C) Tymoshenko argued that social programs and improving living standards would also go a long way toward uniting east and west. Once basic needs were taken care of, the population would have little trouble with NATO. As a result, her government was working hard in this area too. The PM suggested that U.S. support, from programs like the Millennium Challenge Corporation, could help a great deal, especially in regions that were anti-Western, and places where Russia was active in promoting development -- namely, Donetsk, Luhansk and Crimea.

How the West Can Help

¶110. (C) The PM asked for U.S. help in two areas -- with the President and with the opposition. She argued that the unity of the orange coalition was critical, but that it was

threatened by negative divisions. In 2005, the coalition collapsed and the reforms stopped for three years. Tymoshenko noted that the U.S. had great influence with her coalition partner, and urged us to tell the President that the "unity of the coalition" is important and to ensure that presidential elections do not take place until 2010. With regard to the opposition Party of Regions, Tymoshenko said that the party cared about international opinion and therefore, it was important for the U.S. to convince them to support the request for MAP. She noted that Yanukovych had "built his career" on the anti-NATO issue and might not be influenced. However, Regions leader Akhmetov was accessible and open. As a big businessman, Akhmetov would be interested in how MAP and closer relations with NATO could mean new markets and profits.

¶111. (C) In closing, Congressman Wexler said that whatever the U.S. decision regarding Ukraine's request for a MAP, we wanted to ensure that Bucharest was a positive outcome for Ukraine and he asked whether there might be an answer "in-between" that stops short of "yes," but still allows Ukraine to declare victory. Tymoshenko responded that it was possible, but that we still needed to find such an answer. DPM Nemirya chimed in to agree that a positive result was important, "if not MAP, then some kind of clear indication that shows the Government of Ukraine is committed, consistent, well-coordinated and delivers." He noted that the Annual Target Plan had just been approved and that a

significant amount of money had been included in the budget for the NATO Information Campaign. Nemiryia said that the establishment of a DPM for European integration showed the Government's commitment. Tymoshenko agreed with Nemiryia's comment about the importance of a positive result at Bucharest and acknowledged that the Allied answer could be "not yet, but something else." However, she quickly added "but a yes would be better." When the Ambassador added, "you'll have to do the work," the PM responded "I'm ready."

¶12. (U) Congressman Wexler did not have an opportunity to clear this cable prior to his departure from Kyiv.

¶13. (U) Visit Embassy Kyiv's classified website:
www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/kiev.

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